



PRESS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Seven MDOC Mississippi State Penitentiary Employees Receive Outstanding Employee Recognition Awards

Parchman -. Mississippi Department of Corrections (MDOC) Commissioner Robert L. Johnson today presented recognition awards to eight employees at the Mississippi State Penitentiary (MSP) in Parchman, Miss. The veteran employees were recognized for their outstanding performance at the state prison and were saluted for their loyalty and dedication to corrections' cause. "It is indeed a personal honor for me to present these awards to each of you to you for your unwavering loyalty and your untiring public service here at the Mississippi State Penitentiary," said Commissioner Johnson.

Mississippi State Penitentiary employees receiving awards for January 2002 included:

Damita Little Drew, Miss.	Personnel Technician MSP Personnel Office	Staff Employee of the Month
Barron Story Cleveland, Miss.	Correctional Officer IV, Area I	Correctional Officer of the Month
May LeFlore Cleveland, Miss.	Academic Teacher, Coord. Pre-Release Program	Extra Effort Award
Pamela Lee Mound Bayou, Miss.	Correctional Supervisor Unit 32-D, Area IV	Extra Effort Award
Mildred Blount Webb, Miss.	Correctional Officer IV Central Security Admin.	Extra Effort Award
Fay Noel Parchman, Miss.	Key Control Central Security	Extra Effort Award
Quincy Smith Gunnison, Miss.	Correctional Officer IV Unit 30	Extra Effort Award

The 2 p.m. special awards presentation ceremony was held in MSP's Spiritual Life Center. Staff, family members and friends were in attendance as Warden Maud Irby announced the names of the award recipients. Corrections Commissioner Robert L. Johnson assisted with the presentations to the recipients. Each received lapel pins and certificates. Additionally, plaques were presented to the recipients of the Staff Employee and Correctional of the Month awards.

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In his address, Commissioner Johnson congratulated the prison staff for its outstanding effort. “We are extremely proud of each and everyone of the nearly 1,800 highly dedicated employees here at MSP,” he said. “We owe a great debt of gratitude for your untiring public service. Your assignment is difficult and you must constantly be vigilant in the name of public safety.”

MSP, which encompasses over 16,000 acres of rich delta farmland, is located in Sunflower County, Miss. “MSP plays a key role in the overall mission of MDOC,” said prison Warden Maud Irby. “Our facility currently has the capacity to house 5,551 prisoners. It is the largest public prison in the state and, by far, it has the most difficult assignment due to its size and the nature of its prison population.” MSP’s daily population averages over 5,200 inmates.

Damita Little, Personnel Technician, of Drew, received the Staff Employee of the Month recognition award. Ms. Little, a 4-year veteran with the prison system, currently serves as a personnel technician at the Mississippi State Penitentiary’s Personnel Department. “She is simply amazing,” said Ruth Washington, Personnel Office Director. “She does a yeoman’s job in our office. In addition to her personnel role, she serves in clerical support to the personnel office staff.” Ms. Little was saluted for her gracious manner and her poise and was commended for her willingness to pitch in help wherever she was needed. Ms. Deborah Johnson, Personnel Officer IV, who also works closely with Ms. Little, complimented her on her people skills, her organizational ability, and her seemingly untiring manner to see an assignment through to completion. “It’s hard to believe that she performs all of her assigned tasks and still maintains a sufficient energy level to attend night school at Delta State University where she is working on her master’s degree. She is highly deserving to be recognized as staff employee of the month.”

Barron Story, Correctional Officer IV, of Cleveland, was presented the Correctional Officer of the Month award. Officer Story, an 11-year veteran with the Mississippi State Penitentiary, was nominated to receive the award by Area I Warden Dwight Presley. Officer Story was commended for both his loyalty and dedication to his job. “Officer Story excels in his assigned tasks and his enthusiastic manner is a boost to the morale of those with whom he works,” said Warden Presley. He was noted for his significant contributions to Area I and was saluted for his civic involvement. “We owe a debt of gratitude to Officer Story for his supervisory role over the Area I yard/grounds crew and the restoration efforts at Unit-29’s gymnasium following a fire which damaged the facility last November,” stated Warden Presley. “Thanks to the many long hours that Officer Story and his offender work crew devoted in the refurbishment efforts, prison officials anticipate that the gymnasium will be operational by the end of February,” Warden Presley said.

May LeFlore, Academic Teacher, of Cleveland, a 20-year employee at the Mississippi State Penitentiary, received the Extra Effort award. Nominated by Jacqueline Parker, Director of MSP’s Pre-Release Program, Ms. LeFlore was praised for her untiring efforts in developing a well-rounded education program for MSP’s pre-release participants. “Ms. LeFlore’s drive and determination resulted in the expanded development from a one teacher program when she joined Pre-Release to its current complement of five instructors who now serve 192 students on a daily basis,” said Ms. Parker. “Ms. LeFlore has made and continues to have a dynamic impact on Pre-Release’s highly successful mission at MSP.” In addition to supervising our Pre-Release instructors, Ms. LeFlore also teaches a class of offenders as well. Twelve offenders in her pre-GED class have earned their GED’s since July. She has also provided certification training for all Pre-Release teachers at the state’s three public prisons on the new GED 2002 program.”

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Pamela Lee, Correctional Supervisor, of Mound Bayou, a six-year veteran with the prison system, received the Extra Effort award. Nominated by Correctional Commander James Banks, Ms. Lee was saluted for her untiring work in security at the prison “Correctional Supervisor Lee does a commendable job in her supervisory role at Unit-32, D Building,” said Commander Banks. “She has excellent management skills in her ability to supervise officers and inmates alike.” She was commended by the manner that she provides encouragement to staff to work together as a team. Correctional Commander Banks stated, “Unit-32 is a stressful place in which to work. However, Correctional Supervisor Lee has a unique ability to take the edge off through her enthusiastic leadership. Her willingness to go the extra mile, her pleasant demeanor and readiness to assist others helps to uplift staff’s morale.”

Mildred Blunt, Correctional Officer IV, of Webb, received the Extra Effort award. Officer Blunt is a 12-year veteran at MSP and is currently assigned to Central Security Administration at the prison. Correctional Supervisor Aslee Stevenson nominated Officer Blunt for the award noting her loyal and dedicated service to the agency. “Officer Blunt is a ‘team player,’” said Blunt. “She is vigilant in her role as a security officer. If there is a staff shortage on any given watch, she volunteers to assist. This is the true ideal of a security officer.”

Fay Noel, Correctional Officer IV, of Parchman, received the Extra Effort award. Officer Noel is assigned to Central Security Key Control and is an 11-year veteran with the prison system. Correctional Supervisor Alsee Stevenson nominated Officer Noel and saluted her for her camaraderie and her dedication. “Officer Noel is to be commended for her spirit of volunteerism,” said Stevenson. “She goes beyond the call of duty and is willing without hesitation to offer her assistance to prison administration whenever it is needed.” Officer Noel was also praised for her expertise in training visitation bus drivers to shuffle visitors on the prison grounds.

Quincy Smith, Correctional IV, of Gunnison, was nominated by Correctional Commander Anderson Bradford to receive the Extra Effort award. Officer Smith, who is a nine-year veteran with the prison system, is assigned to Unit-30 Area I at the Mississippi State Penitentiary. “Officer Smith is a classic example of a dedicate employee,” said Commander Bradford. “He is a self starter and works in close concert with his fellow officers.” Commander Bradford noted that Officer Smith had recently been involved in a special assignment that had required him to prepare offenders for special work details. Commander Bradford stated, “Officer Smith has voluntarily taken it upon himself to report to his post early each day to assure that all offender work details are in proper order. We are most fortunate to have a person with Officer Smith’s leadership skills and ability and dedication on our corrections team.”

A Memorial Award was presented to honor Correctional Officer III Aletia Rucker. Officer Rucker, who passed away on Jan. 16, 2002, was assigned to Central Security at MSP. Officer Rucker worked nearly seven years with the prison system. Ms. Annie Rucker, sister of the officer, received a memorial plaque commemorating her years of dedicated service to the prison system.

A Memorial Award plaque was presented to Mrs. Willie Gilmore to honor her husband, Correctional Officer IV Raymond Gilmore, a 21-year veteran with MSP who passed away in mid-January. Officer Gilmore, who was assigned to Central Security at MSP, was praised for his unfaltering dedication to the cause of corrections.

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Media Note: If you would like a digital photograph of the service award recipients, e-mail bgreenleaf@mdoc.state.ms.us or phone him at (601) 359-5646.

